

# A KENTUCKY HISTORY MOMENT



*A glass fragment from an oil bottle from the "Old American Oil Well." It was used in bottling oil from the American Oil Well, drilled in March 1829 on the bank of Little Renox Creek near Burkesville, Kentucky. Kentucky Historical Society, S.A. Carey Collection, 1942.28.*

## **CUMBERLAND COUNTY: SEARCH FOR SALT YIELDS OIL**

Martin Beaty drilled for brine in 1829, but he found oil – a gusher that soon spread oil to the Cumberland River and ignited. The blaze, described as a spectacular "river of fire," burned for three weeks and disrupted river traffic. Oil bottled from this well was sold widely for medicinal use in the United States and Europe under the name "American Oil." After about 30 years, the well finally produced salt water.



## **KentuckyHistoricalSociety**

100 W. Broadway | Frankfort KY | 502-564-1792 | [history.ky.gov](http://history.ky.gov)

The Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) educates and engages the public through Kentucky's history in order to confront the challenges of the future. KHS, an agency of the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet, is accredited by the American Association of Museums.